



Report

Survey of Latino Attitudes on the War in Iraq

February 7, 2005

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Attitudes towards the war in Iraq are more negative among Latinos than in the general population with most saying that U.S. troops should be withdrawn as soon as possible, according to a Pew Hispanic Center survey conducted as President George W. Bush began his second term in office.

Foreign-born Latinos consistently show less approving attitudes towards the war and the president's handling of the conflict than Latinos born in the United States.

This survey was conducted by telephone from January 11 to 27, 2005 among a nationally representative sample of 1,003 adults who identified themselves as being of Latino or Hispanic origin or descent. All fieldwork was performed by International Communications Research of Media, PA using Random Digit Dialing (RDD) methodology. The results for the full sample have a margin of error of 3.1 percent.

The Center conducts nonpartisan research on a variety of topics including demographic trends, education and the labor force, and it explores Latino attitudes through public opinion surveys. Based in Washington, DC, the Center is a project of the Pew Research Center and is supported by The Pew Charitable Trusts

A slight majority of Hispanics (51%) think U.S. troops should be withdrawn from Iraq as soon as possible. Significantly fewer (37%) say that the United States should keep military troops in Iraq until the situation has stabilized. On the question of how long to keep troops in Iraq, the U.S.born are about evenly split while the foreign born favor prompt withdrawal by a margin of almost two-to-one. (Table 1) This survey was completed before the elections in Iraq on January 30.

A separate survey of the general population conducted by the Pew Research Center for the People and the Press earlier in January asked a comparable question and found greater support for keeping U.S. military forces in Iraq. Conducted from January 5 to 9 with a sample of 1,503 adults representative of the entire population, this survey found that 41 percent of the general public favors bringing U.S. troops home as soon as possible while 54 percent think the United States should keep troops in Iraq until the situation has stabilized. The Pew Research Center for the People and the Press is also a project of the Pew Research Center.

Table 1

Do you think the U.S. should keep military troops in Iraq until the situation has stabilized, or do you think the U.S. should withdraw its troops as soon as possible?

	January 2005		
	Total Latino	US Born	Foreign Born
Keep the military troops in Iraq	37	47	29
Withdraw troops	51	46	55
DK/NA	12	6	15

Other differences within the Hispanic population emerged on this question according to gender, education, income and country of origin.

Males favor keeping U.S. troops in Iraq more (46%) than females (27%). Nearly half (47%) of Latinos with at least some college education favor keeping troops in Iraq compared to a third (33%) of those with a high school education or less. Similarly, a significantly greater share (56%) of Latinos with annual household incomes of \$50,000 or more favor keeping the troops in Iraq than among those with household incomes less than \$50,000 a year (36%). A large majority of Latinos of Puerto Rican origin (70% vs.23%) favors withdrawing the troops rather than keeping them in Iraq. Among those of Mexican origins the split is narrower (50% vs.38%) in favor of withdrawal. Those of Cuban origins lean towards withdrawal but the size of the sample does not permit a precise breakdown. The same basic tendencies with regard to each of these variables are also evident when Latinos are asked whether the United States made the right decision or the wrong decision in using military force against Iraq.

Table 2

Do you approve or disapprove of the way George W. Bush is handling the situation in Iraq?

	January 2004			April-June 2004			January 2005		
	Total Latino	US Born	Foreign Born	Total Latino	US Born	Foreign Born	Total Latino	US Born	Foreign Born
Approve	47	48	46	32	39	28	33	42	28
Disapprove	41	43	40	58	55	59	55	52	57
DK/NA	12	8	14	10	6	13	11	6	16

A little more than half of Latinos (55%) disapprove of the way President Bush is handling the situation in Iraq while a third (33%) approve, and the U.S.-born are significantly more positive than the foreign born. (Table 2) A similar range of views was found the last time the Center polled Latinos on this question in a survey that was conducted between April 21 and June 9, 2004. It appears that the last significant change in Latino attitudes in this regard was registered in January 2004 not long after the capture of Saddam Hussein when positive attitudes towards the war surged.

The January 2005 survey by the Pew Research Center for the People and the Press found that 45 percent of the general population approved of the president's handling of the situation in Iraq while 50 percent disapproved. Surveys conducted in 2004 found similar patterns of changes in views on the war over time in the general population and among Hispanics.

Table 3

How would you rate the job George W. Bush is doing as President of the United States—would you say he is doing an excellent, good, mediocre, or poor job?

	January 2004			February-March 2004			January 2005		
	Total Latino	US Born	Foreign Born	Total Latino	US Born	Foreign Born	Total Latino	US Born	Foreign Born
Excellent/Good	54	53	55	52	42	59	48	49	48
Mediocre/Poor	43	46	42	46	57	38	42	46	39
DK/NA	3	1	4	2	1	3	9	5	13

Latinos are somewhat more inclined to give the president favorable job performance ratings than they are to find fault with 48 percent saying that he is doing an excellent or good job and 42 percent saying is doing a mediocre or poor job. (Table 3) Attitudes in the general population are similar. The January survey by the Pew Research Center for the People and the Press found that 50 percent of the public approves of the way President Bush is handling his job while 43 percent disapproved.

Other major findings from the survey of Latino attitudes towards the war in Iraq:

Table 4

Do you think George W. Bush has a clear plan for bringing the situation in Iraq to a successful conclusion, or don't you think so?

	February-March 2004			April-June 2004			January 2005		
	Total Latino	US Born	Foreign Born	Total Latino	US Born	Foreign Born	Total Latino	US Born	Foreign Born
Yes	39	36	42	28	28	29	30	36	25
No	53	60	48	59	65	55	55	57	54
DK/NA	9	5	10	13	7	16	15	7	20

Table 5

Do you think the US made the right decision or the wrong decision in using military force against Iraq?

	April-June 2004			January 2005		
	Total Latino	US Born	Foreign Born	Total Latino	US Born	Foreign Born
Right Decision	39	50	32	37	48	28
Wrong Decision	48	42	51	51	46	54
DK/NA	13	8	17	12	5	18

Table 6

Do you think the Bush Administration deliberately misled the American public about how big a threat Iraq was to the United States before the war began, or not?

	February-March 2004			April-June 2004			January 2005		
	Total Latino	US Born	Foreign Born	Total Latino	US Born	Foreign Born	Total Latino	US Born	Foreign Born
Yes	48	55	44	51	56	48	45	52	40
No	42	38	45	35	37	33	42	41	42
DK/NA	9	6	11	14	7	18	13	6	18

Methodology

The survey was conducted by telephone from January 11 to 27, 2005 among a nationally representative sample of 1,003 adults age 18 and older who identified themselves as being of Hispanic or Latino origin or descent.

International Communications Research of Media, PA conducted the fieldwork in either English or Spanish, based on the respondent's preference. The sample design employed a highly stratified disproportionate Random Digit Dialing (RDD) sample of the 48 contiguous states. The results are weighted to represent the actual distribution of adults throughout the United States. All telephone exchanges within the contiguous United States are listed in descending order by concentration of Latino households. These exchanges are then divided into various groups, or strata, based on the coverage of Latino households per stratum. Sample generation within each defined stratum utilized a strict epsem sampling procedure, providing equal probability of selection to every telephone number.

The margins of error are as follows:

Total Latinos = 3.1%
U.S. Born Latinos = 6.1%
Foreign Born Latinos = 3.6%

Other surveys of the Latino population by the Pew Hispanic Center are available at:

www.pewhispanic.org

Surveys of the general population by the Pew Research Center for the People and the Press are available at:

www.people-press.org

Links to all projects at the Pew Research Center are available at:

www.pewresearch.org